

FCCB  
c/o Benny Bolin  
5510 Bolin Rd.  
Allen, Texas 75002  
(972)727-2395  
smcbb@worldnet.att.net

## **FRACTIONAL CURRENCY COLLECTORS BOARD**

### **JULY 2000 NEWSLETTER**

#### **MEMPHIS**

Another Memphis is in the history books! As usual, it was an incredible time, with new notes to buy, friends to see and new ones to make and wonderful fun to be had! If you did not attend, I would encourage you to begin planning so you can attend next year. It is truly the best show that a paper money collector can attend. At the show, I was privileged to become member of the board of governors of the Society of Paper Money Collectors. If you have questions or ideas for the SPMC, let me know. The SPMC will be celebrating its' 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001 and there will be a special anniversary edition of PAPER MONEY. The FCCB will be buying an ad for this special edition.

#### **FCCB ANNUAL MEETING**

The Fractional Currency Collectors Board (FCCB) held it's annual meeting at the Memphis Coin Club's International Paper Money Show on Saturday, June 17th, 2000 at 1:00 p.m. in the New Orleans Room. The minutes of that meeting from our very worthy scribe, Mr. Cohen are attached. We had a room full of people and a very successful meeting. We talked about our excellent financial condition, advertising in the newsletter, our website and some other special business. After the business part of the meeting, Doug Hales and Tom O'Mara presented a slide presentation and discussion on their recent findings in the National Numismatic Collection's fractional currency holdings at the Smithsonian Institution. I think they whetted all of our appetites for future disclosures from them about what else they found. I did find it to be a bit daunting knowing I need 300-1200 of each type of fourth and fifth issue notes for a set! If you did not attend, I encourage you to make plans to attend next year.

#### **NEW VICE PRESIDENT**

Bob Laub was named VP of the FCCB replacing Doug Hales. As you all know, there has never been an election in the history of the FCCB—all officer positions are purely voluntary. When Bob decided he wanted to become more involved in our group, he volunteered to take over the duties of VP and Doug *enthusiastically?? graciously??* voted in favor of the transition. So, welcome Bob and please everyone, take a moment to thank Doug for his hard work, both with the hobby and the club. I personally owe him so many debts of gratitude, I can never repay him!

## SIMPLIFIED EDITION

A really neat thing that transpired at Memphis is that Milt Friedberg gave the club permission to reprint the simplified edition of the encyclopedia in a format that we can market. Somehow, (*cannot seem to say NO*), I think I am kind of in charge of this. Over the coming months, with Mike Marchioni's guidance, I will be costing this out and seeing if we can format it for this use. We all owe a big **THANK YOU** to Milt!

## MEMPHIS RAFFLE

In order to supplement our financial status, which is totally dependent on dues (we have 50 members who have not paid Y2K dues!), we held a raffle at the meeting this year. Money artist Tim Prusmack, now a new member, donated a large drawing of his Grant/Sherman note, Rob Kravitz donated two of Mr. Prusmack's 1999 Spinner notes and Larry Falater donated a fractional note for a raffle. Tickers were \$10 and we raised \$250 to supplement the treasury!

**THANK YOU TO TIM, ROB AND LARRY!!!**

## MEMPHIS EXHIBITS

As always, the fractional exhibits were the cream of the crop at Memphis. While no major awards were won, our five exhibits were excellent. As always, Len and Jean Glazer donated beautiful plaques for the top three exhibits. These are truly magnificent plaques that you can be proud of for years to come. Please let them know how much you appreciate their support of this endeavor. I now have 11 of these plaques and cherish each and every one. You will all be happy to know **THE STREAK IS STILL ALIVE!!!** Yes, once again, I did not win! 16 years in a row! For those of you who may be new, let me also say, I have never felt I should have won either. It is now my mission to beat Susan Lucci's record before I win. First place went to our President, Tom O'Mara for his exhibit on experiments. Second place went to Bob Laub for his exhibit on fiber paper notes and I was fortunate enough to get third place for my exhibit on fractional currency errors. Doug Hales also exhibited an unbound fractional currency presentation book (his text was excellent and is included in this newsletter) and Bill Brandimore did a very nice exhibit on notes with provenances. A big thanks to all the exhibitors and to our own charter member, Martin Delger who has served for years as exhibit chairman.

## 2001 EXHIBITS

Yes, now is the time to start planning for those 2001 exhibits. It is the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPMS and Mart Delger is encouraging as many exhibits as possible for this special show. I have already begun my exhibit, nicknamed "*The Rogues Gallery of Fractional*" by one collector I talked with. We in fractional collecting have a unique opportunity next year. We are one of the few collecting areas that can truly capture that theme—25! I think a couple of exhibits on 25-cent notes would be great! I would like to do my annual debunking of a few excuses for not exhibiting.

1. "*I don't have time*"—well, as I see it you have over 300 days from the time you read this until Memphis 2001. That would be time plenty to plan an exhibit.
2. "*I don't know what to exhibit*"—again pure bunk! What do you like? Anything will make an interesting exhibit. Just find something you like and can tell a story about it, make it neat and pretty and walla—exhibit!
3. "*My notes aren't good enough to exhibit*"—biggest bunk of all. While most of us don't have notes the quality of Tom, Bob or others, unlike stamp exhibits, condition

is not a big deal. If you make an eye-pleasing presentation that has interesting facts and a good story to tell, you have a good exhibit. I have exhibited notes from AG to CU. This was the first year I have exhibited a note that cost more than \$500 and I have 16 exhibitor plaques and 11 winner plaques! It is not the condition or rarity that counts most—it is the presentation and the story you tell.

So, as you can see, no excuse is acceptable. **Get started today!!!** Martin did want me to pass along that he expects a lot of new and larger exhibits for next year and that you need to return his paperwork as soon as you get it in order to guarantee you a spot!

## **NEW FINDS (and reporting thereof)**

Unfortunately, at Memphis, there were no new finds reported to me. There was however, a recent find of a Fr.1239 with inverted back found at an East Coast show. I would like to ask that if you find a new note or one that has a rarity of 7 or higher, to let us know so Milt can assign it a number and/or adjust the rarity/census.

## **DUES ARE DUE!**

Yes, dues were due in January. We currently have 201 members on our roster. Unfortunately, I just sent 50 of them letters stating they will be dropped from the roles if they do not pay their dues. If you know of someone who has not paid, please encourage him or her to do so.

## **FCCB WEBSITE**

President O'Mara introduced the group to our new webmaster, Paul Burkhard and we discussed the FCCB website. It is located at [www.fractionalcurrency.org](http://www.fractionalcurrency.org). I encourage you all to visit it. Paul has done a phenomenal job developing the site and is to be commended. One of the buttons on the site is the LINKS button. Send Paul your web address, e-mail address and maybe your phone number if you have neither and he can put you on the page. There is also a FRACTIONAL FORUM on the page where on-line discussions can take place. It has been used quite a bit and many questions posed have been answered by some of our more knowledgeable members.

## **ANA PRESENTATIONS**

If you are going to the upcoming ANA summer convention in Chicago (*I think*), please make sure you make time and visit two of our members as they present educational seminars. Bob Laub will be presenting our slide show on "*Fractional Currency and other Bridges to the Civil War Small Change Crisis*." Also, Tim Prusmack will be doing a presentation on *Money Art*. Please support these two members in their endeavors.

## **FCCB NEWS INDEX**

At Memphis, I was told that it would be a good idea to index all the past articles of the FCCB news and publish them so new members could get copies if they need them. Since I do this every year after the last newsletter is printed, I was a bit taken aback. Then, I realized I did not send it out this year and possibly not last. So, I will be working on getting this updated and it will be in the first newsletter of 2001. I apologize for my oversight!

# **MINUTES FRACTIONAL CURRENCY COLLECTORS BOARD ANNUAL MEETING - 2000**

The year 2000 Annual Meeting of the Fractional Currency Collectors Board (FCCB) was formally called to order at several minutes after 1:00 P.M., June 17, 2000, in the Natchez Room, Downtown Memphis Marriott Hotel, Memphis, TN, President Tom O'Mara presiding. This FCCB 2000 meeting was scheduled during the year 2000 International Paper Money Show. Attendance totaled over thirty members and guests.

President O'Mara introduced the FCCB "Officers" to those in attendance: Tom O'Mara, President; Doug Hales, Vice President; Benny Bolin, Executive Secretary and Newsletter Editor; Dr. Wally Lee, Treasurer; Chief Bill Brandimore, Membership Secretary; Howard Cohen, Scribe.

Vice President Doug Hales requested to speak from the podium, and Pres. O'Mara yielded. VP Hales stated that the FCCB was a volunteer organization and members assumed positions voluntarily and not through election. If a member desired to assume a position, that member was given the position, unless there was stated opposition. VP Hales indicated the Bob Laub had indicated a desire to be Vice President of the FCCB. Doug Hales supported Mr. Laub for VP and indicated that Bob Laub would be a very good representative of the FCCB at the numerous shows which Mr. Laub attended. With no opposition, Mr. Hales gave the VP position to Mr. Laub.

Treasurer Dr. Wally Lee gave his report. Dr. Lee indicated that the FCCB had \$1,371.72 in expenses in the last year. Carry-over funds plus funds received during the year totaled in excess of \$3,200, leaving a current balance in excess of \$1,800. Exec. Sec. Bolin indicated that mailings and the production costs of the Newsletter were the largest expenses during the year. (It is noted that Exec. Sec. Bolin and his family volunteer, at no cost, considerable labor to the production, reproduction, and mailing of each newsletter.)

Membership Sec. Brandimore indicated that the FCCB had approximately 200 active members. He said that the FCCB averages about one new member per week. This new membership rate offsets attrition of existing members to keep membership at the 200 level. Sec. Brandimore indicated that publicity and information provided by many dealers was a large factor in the membership level of the FCCB.

Exec. Sec. Benny Bolin indicated that we now have international members and a mailing to an international member costs (postage) considerably more than a mailing to a domestic member. A motion was made to increase dues to US\$32 for international members. Comments were made that international members give wider visibility to the hobby and this was a valuable asset. A member volunteered to offset the cost of international mailings. The motion was withdrawn.

Under old business, Mike Marchioni reported that Milt Friedberg (Emeritus President, Emeritus Vice President, and Emeritus Exec. Secretary) has generously donated the *Simplified Edition of the Encyclopedia of United States Fractional and Postage Currency* to the FCCB. All proceeds from the publication or sale of the "Simplified Edition" would go to the FCCB.

Under new business, Pres. O'Mara indicated that the SPMC was publishing its 40th Anniversary Edition of *Paper Money* and he moved that the FCCB pay for a congratulatory advertisement in the publication. Without opposition, this was approved.

Member David Cassel has published *United States Pattern Postage Currency Coins*. Only 14 now remain unsold. If you wish to order one, please refer to the enclosure in the "May 2000 Newsletter" of the FCCB.

Pres. O'Mara stated that several members had generously donated fractional currency and related items to the FCCB, to be raffled by the Club to members. Members eagerly purchased opportunities to acquire the materials donated.

Member Tim Prumack, proprietor of Money Masterpieces, supplied the FCCB with a full colored, enlarged photo replication of a fractional currency note. This was the "1st" prize. Money Masterpieces has and can replicate any note in any size, and does custom work.

Member Rob Kravitz, Rob's Coins and Currency, generously donated two (2) pieces of fractional currency for 2nd and 3rd place raffle prizes. Mr. Kravitz has also published a beautifully colored Price List of Fractional Currency (including a FCCB membership application). For details in obtaining this beautifully done List, members can contact Rob at 916-687-7219.

Member Larry Falater generously donated a nice UNC fractional currency piece for the 4th place raffle prize.

Drawings were made at the meeting and the prizes distributed.

Continuing with new business, Pres. O'Mara indicated that there have been requests by both members and dealers to advertise in the FCCB newsletter. Pres. O'Mara indicated that, anticipating future expenses of the FCCB, paid advertising in the newsletter could be a source of revenue. Members also indicated that advertisements by members could help locate (or relocate) fractional currency or related material among members. A motion was made and seconded "Not to have advertising in the Newsletter". This motion was approved by a majority of members, with several dissenting.

Pres. O'Mara mentioned that the Internet has become a valuable and valued source of information on virtually every conceivable subject. "Pages" on the Internet (a page on the Internet is a location on the Internet with a unique address - that is, a unique name) have provided substantial amounts of information on currency to those who have accessed specific pages, particularly numismatic related pages and Internet auction locations.

Pres. O'Mara indicated that several members had volunteered to create ("construct", in Internet jargon) a page for the FCCB. The FCCB page may be accessed on the World Wide Web at the following address on the web : **[www.fractionalcurrency.org](http://www.fractionalcurrency.org)**. Member Paul Burkhard is the "Webmaster".

The FCCB "Home" page (that which a user sees upon getting to the address) contains a listing of several topics: (1) What is the FCCB?, (2) How do I join?, (3) What is Fractional Currency, (4) Why collect Fractional currency?, (5) What's new on the FCCB Site?, (6) The Fractional Forum., (7) Current Events in Fractional Currency, (8) Fractionally Asked Questions, (9) "The Encyclopedia of Postage and Fractional Currency", (10) Resources and Links, (11) The FCCB Online Collection of Fractional Currency, (12) A letter from the President, (13) The Much Understood Mr. Clark, (14) Who are these people?, (15) A needed link we have not thought of yet?, and (16) Contact us. About half of the topic areas have not yet been completed ("under construction").

Pres. O'Mara indicated that there was an apparent keen interest in Fractional Currency. While the site was still under construction, it was accessed over 100 times.

Pres. O'Mara indicated that he felt "The Fractional Forum" was a major topic on the page. In the Fractional Forum, questions could be posed and responded to by any one visiting the Web page ("site").

Paul Burkhard discussed the creation and on-going creation of the FCCB Internet page and topics. He indicated that anyone accessing "How do I join" could download an application form in a variety of formats and

then print the application form. Paul said that links to (and from) related sites and dealers would be included under "Resources and Links". Paul also stated that the Forum was a good place for seeking information; but, he would not allow commercial transactions to occur on the Forum.

Pres. O'Mara then called for the presentation of exhibit awards. Member and SPMC Exhibit Chairman Martin Delger, temporarily disabled, requested Mike Marchioni to present the beautiful awards, given once again by the generosity of Len and Jean Glazer.

Third Place went to Benny Bolin for "Fractional Currency Errors". Second Place was awarded to Bob Laub for "Fractional Currency, 'The Fiber Paper Challenge' ", and 1st place was presented to Tom O'Mara for "Fractional Currency Experimental and Essay Notes".

The topic for presentation at the meeting was members Tom O'Mara and Doug Hales visit to the Smithsonian to view the archives of Fractional Currency. Tom mentioned that Jim Hughes of the Smithsonian had made a presentation to the SPMC in Memphis in 1999. During his time at the 1999 Meeting, Mr. Hughes had observed the Fractional Currency exhibits and had indicated his surprise at the interest in Fractional Currency, as evidenced by the exhibits and their quality. Tom O'Mara, coincidentally nearby during this, introduced himself and was invited to visit and view the Smithsonian material.

Tom, and Doug Hales, made arrangements to visit and were allowed 2 days to view the material. The material, being vast, Tom and Doug focused on Plate Proofs and Artists' Proofs. Tom indicated that the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP) had transferred to the Smithsonian, in 1972, plate proofs of every plate that the BEP used in printing Fractional Currency. Given time limitations, Tom and Doug viewed as many of the proofs as time allowed, and recorded each plate proof's number, format, and size. Requests for several photos to be taken by Smithsonian staff were made. Tom and Doug presented slides of the photos taken by the Smithsonian, and discussed these.

Tom and Doug indicated that they will present writings of their findings later for all members.

Upon conclusion of the slide presentation, the year 2000 FCCB meeting was adjourned.

## SUMMER 2000 - A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Memphis!!!! Well it once again was better than expected. How many times can one be thrilled going to Memphis in June? Fractionally speaking, it was wonderful. There were many first time fractional collectors at the show, and many new fractional faces at our FCCB Annual Meeting. Both new and old timers blended together nicely and made for a great show. There was much information shared over meals and in the bourse aisles that makes Memphis an excellent event for all fractional collectors. Apparently, there were some terrible thunderstorms in the Midwest region on Thursday, which postponed or delayed airline flights all over the country. Well despite Mother Nature's attempts to keep many paper money collectors from Memphis this year, they managed by "hook or crook" to arrive. At the Society of Paper Money Collector's (SPMC) breakfast on Friday morning, many recounted their adventurous routes of travel including an 18-hour trip via airplane from Philadelphia to Memphis. No this ardent traveler did not go via any foreign country, but yes, irrespective of ridiculous delays, he kept his spirits high and made it safely to Memphis and had a numismatically satisfying trip. Maybe it was the thought of uncovering a new find for his collection which kept him sane while toiling away the hours in various airports between Philadelphia and Memphis, or maybe it was the thought of those barbecue ribs – either way, hats off to another paper money collector who would bare almost anything to spend a few days browsing the aisles and chatting with fellow collectors.

Fractional Currency was in great demand on the bourse. Although it seemed as if fewer dealers handled fractional items of high grade and/or rarity, there were plenty of stacks at most dealers tables which needed a once over. Additionally, only at Memphis do you get the chance to look through many dealer inventories of off-the-wall goodies which include fractional related items. At Memphis there are usually many of these dealers and it is always a blast to spend time perusing their inventory. There were two heralded auctions at Memphis this year, one by Lyn F. Knight and the other by R.M. Smythe, but there was very little by means of significant fractional items in either sale. A handful of pieces from CAA's FUN 2000 sale seemed to have resurfaced in the Knight sale which were interesting, but all in all, the auctions this year came up a little lighter than most years. Of course the combined results of all paper money in these two sales set a record even if fractional currency wasn't widely represented. This does however suggest a good strong broader paper money market, and much of this could be expected to spill into fractionals. There is still a vibrant economy (thanks to Mr. Greenspan's supposed soft landing – again) and the hobby's collector-base is increasing. Given a slow down in sales and supply from some of the older collections, the nice moderate increase in fractional demand has been met with a steady increase in some pricing levels. As the current Currency Dealer Newsletter (CDN) keeps pointing out "fractionals keep showing renewed interest". It still amazes me how many advanced fractional collections could be built and enjoyed for the cost of one or two no so rare large size U.S. type notes. I think I prefer to keep this our secret for as long as we can.

The exhibits were great again this year (if that could be imagined)... There were five in competition and everyone who exhibited deserves thanks from the FCCBers (and all Memphis attendees). As an exhibitor, I can assure you; the time it takes is tough...and you can bet that Thursday evening and/or Friday morning would be preferably spent by this exhibitor at Rendezvous or scouring the bourse. I often wonder how many notes I would have found had I not spent that time setting up, and I might seem crazy, but it is a lot of time at the convention as well as all the time in preparation. So to those fellow exhibitors Mr.'s Bolin, Brandimore, Hales, and Laub... CONGRATS and THANKS from the FCCB.

Now to the really important kudos category – FCCBers who make the exhibiting possible. Yes folks, once again they are made possible by FCCBers who year in and year out make it all happen. First off is Exhibit Chair Martin Delger. He has not only kept the fractional exhibits going, but also maintains all the Memphis exhibiting area humming. Yes he puts up with our last minute applications and changes in number of exhibit case requests, and although we are reminded time and time again to prepare a little better and help him out, he doesn't turn us down. Always a smile and a friendly joke about us all someday being late to our own funeral, etc.... Again, thanks Martin... also, seriously – next year is the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Memphis show and it is going to be big. I usually don't start reminding/berating until after the FUN show each year, but REALLY plan for Memphis 2001. There is already a record number of exhibits expected to celebrate 25 years of Memphis and Martin may finally have to hold back his smile to all those tardy exhibitors...so for your own sake (and Martin's smile) please think about things a whole lot sooner and get to him on it. Two FCCBers gave me promises on the bourse to exhibit for the first time next year and I am sure others will follow. Let's make Memphis 2001 Fractional exhibits the greatest ever. Finally (I was really dragging on for a moment there)... the two FCCBers who also support our exhibiting year in and year out – Len and Jean Glazer! This year they again donated the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place plaques in the Fractional Exhibit Category. So all know, not every category has category specific awards but we do - and Len and Jean make it so. I personally would like to thank them publicly, and on behalf of all FCCBers – THANKS!!

Finally, but certainly not least... there has been a change of officers at this years FCCB Annual Meeting. Doug Hales, who preceded me as FCCB President and has ably assisted me over the past few years as FCCB Vice President, has stepped down as an active officer after 19 years. Doug was one of a handful of founding FCCBers and has been a great asset to the organization and fractional collecting on the whole for many years. I know I will always consider it a great privilege to have worked with Doug both as an officer of the FCCB and as a fellow collector. Doug – Thanks! Now, to fill those big shoes (it's okay Bob I've been there recently and it can and is a little lonely/scary) is longtime collector and active FCCBer Bob Laub. Bob has been instrumental in raising the level of the fractional hobby over the years and has exciting plans and enthusiasm to boot – so all welcome Bob as the new Vice President of the FCCB. You may have seen him around at a regional show or maybe one of his many prize-winning fractional exhibits, or perhaps one of his many bylines over the years, but however you knew him, I expect you'll see even more in the future. We all wish Bob good luck and not only do I look forward to working with him but all FCCBers should too!

Well, I know I could go on forever... and thanks to our trusty Editor – Mr. Bolin – I can't... so remember, until next time.... Surprise me and write something – a letter to another member, an article, a thought, anything – and send it to our FCCB Editor, Benny Bolin.

Fractionally Yours

Tom O'Mara

President – Fractional Currency Collectors Board

TFXILOM@aol.com



## INTERESTING SPINNER LETTER SURFACES

An interesting letter by Treasurer of the United States Francis E. Spinner has been reported by an FCCB member and was recently acquired in an auction of Lincolniana. The letter is glued to another piece of paper that has on its other side a number of partial letters glued to it. Many seem to be requests for autographs from a gentleman named W. Davis, and most show a date from the 1860's. One letter is in full and is from U.S. Attorney's Office, Massachusetts District with *Richard H. Dana Jr.*'s autograph. Another of the partial letters seems to have a request to not only autograph but to write a quotation. It seems that the Spinner letter is a response to Mr. W. Wallace Davis's request for the Treasurers autograph along with a quotation. Spinner's response seems to highlight his unwillingness to repeat Davis's quotation and in fact corrects it. Francis E. Spinner may not have wanted his handwriting being misconstrued as supporting a non-Union position and he very clearly states his view in correcting the prepared statement.

It reads as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Treasury of the United States</b> Washington, December 10, 1864</p> <p>Sir:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Your favor of the 8<sup>th</sup> instant is received. For the semi-rebel conservative catchphrase "<u>the constitution as it is, and the Union as it was</u>", I give you "<u>the constitution as it ought to be, and the Union as it will be.</u>"</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Very Respectfully Yours,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">F.E. Spinner</p> <p>W. Wallace Davis, . Washington, D.C.</p>
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Treasury of the United States.

Washington, December 10, 1864

Sir:

Your favor of the 8<sup>th</sup> inst. is received.  
In the Anti-Rebel, conservative catch phrase  
"The Constitution as it is, and the Union as it  
now is", I give you "The Constitution as it  
ought to be, and the Union as it will be."

W. Wallan Davis,  
Washington, D.C.

Very Respectfully Yours  
S. S. Pinner

# NumismaticNews

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## Money artist Prusmack enjoys a challenge

BY Timothy Rolands

Tim Prusmack is a coin collector and an artist — a money artist, that is. He creates signed and numbered limited edition interpretations of historical notes as well as original fantasy notes with pen and ink, colored pencils, watercolors and even a hit of charcoal pastels.

### Who's Who

For the past 11 years, the 36-year-old Prusmack has lived in Florida and traveled to various coin shows to sell his work, sometimes accompanied by his mother—Florence, who assists him. He belongs to a number of local and national clubs, including the American Numismatic Association, Florida United Numismatists, the Treasure Coast Coin Club and the Society of Paper Money Collectors.

"I really fell into this career. It was not by design. I never went to art school or had any real training. I graduated from college with a degree in business. The only formal training I had was one college drawing course as an elective.

Prusmack took that single course at C.W. Post College in Long Island where he grew up. His father, Dr. Armand J. Prusmack, former dean and professor emeritus, has artistic talent and was the director of the New York Phoenix School of Design. His mother, Florence, is a teacher of Japanese and Chinese history, English and creative writing. As a youngster, Prusmack spent time at the school, sometimes simply having accompanied his father to work, having been in that atmosphere," he said, something rubbed off on him.

A coin collector since childhood, he eventually began attending various coin shows and started joining clubs. "I joined my local coin club 11 years ago. That's the Treasure Coast Coin Club here in Fort Pierce, Fla., where I was president for five years, too."

He also developed an interest in paper money, and that interest led to Prusmack's artistic endeavors.

"I love the artwork on historical notes. It was just a matter of economics. I saw some of the prices for the kind of notes I do and I figured why not give it a try. I tried some easier notes. As time went by, I refined my techniques and went on to the tougher notes, Educationals, Nationals, and so forth."

His efforts to reproduce notes started

motion in the note, in the figures. I like



with the faces of the circulating \$20 note and \$10 note.

"One day I had a free afternoon. My wallet was out, and I thought I'd just draw this. After I got involved in it, I realized they didn't look half bad. Of course, compared to what I do today, they look rough, not as refined."

He went on to practice some other notes and refined his techniques, working from actual specimens, auction catalogs and other references.

"If the note I'm doing is not really rare and expensive. I try to buy an actual note so I can have it front of me and get a really good look at it. Some people have also lent me some notes."

As his skill improved, he discovered that he preferred the more difficult historical notes to the modern notes.

"I find that I drift toward the classic notes, because the modern notes just aren't challenging. I can do an original from a modern note in about 11-12 hours, whereas, for example, my \$5 Educational took me more than 200 hours to do the original. The longest one I worked on was the 1886 55 silver note with the five Morgan dollars on the back. That one took me 300 hours to do the original."

He explained a little more about how he does it.

"I've been collecting coins for a long time. I have a pretty good idea of the depths and of where everything is supposed to be on the coin, and have developed that sense when it comes to paper. I've studied hooks on certain vignettes and how to do the web work around the borders of certain notes."

He doesn't do a great deal of preliminary sketching for his designs.

"Once I get started on a note design, making my original, that's it. I don't have any practice sketches. I've got the whole thing visualized in my head. It's just a matter of getting it down on paper."

His favorite reproduction so far is his \$5 Educational note, from an 1896 series of Silver Certificates. It depicts an allegorical figure bearing the torch of knowledge.

"It's not just a straight portrait like Washington or Franklin: there's a lot of

that I like the challenge, too."

However, that note isn't everyone's favorite.

Someone once objected to the exposed breast on the Educational note. She said I drew dirty pictures, I told her it was art, not Hustler magazine."

He admitted "I've been called everything from the Mozart of Money Art to counterfeiter."

The U.S. government apparently finds nothing objectionable about Prusmack's money art. And he goes out of his way to make sure the Feds know what he's up to.

"I'm open about what I do. When I finish an original, I send a copy to the U.S. Copyright Office. I copyright it. They forward it to all the federal offices; they bounce it to Treasury, to the FBI, to the Secret Service. So they have a big file on me in Washington."

They seem to recognize the artistic nature of what Prusmack is doing. "I retail my work as limited edition money art, as a collectible."

In fact, some Feds may even be fans of Prusmack's work.

Mary Ellen Withrow, U.S. Treasurer, and Philip Diehl director of the U.S. Mint, are among my customers. They display some of my artwork in their offices."

Even at shows, Prusmack takes advantage of the situation to make sure the government is aware of his presence. "At the big shows like the ANA and FUN shows, I prefer to be set up right next to the U.S. Mint and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing."

Prusmack has tables at shows in sell his work—obviously an important part of his business, but he can no longer attend all the shows he once did.

I just do the major shows. I do the FUN show. the ANA summer convention, the Memphis paper money show, the Collectorama in Lakeland, Fla. They're all 250 plus table shows. I started out doing smaller shows, but I found my product does best when I go to the Large shows I also don't have the time I once did to go to a small show every week. Now that I do this full time, I need as much time as possible to do my designs."

Still a coin collector, Prusmack wishes he had more time at these shows to enjoy the exhibits and dealer tables.

At some of these big shows, I wish I had more time, because I love to take half a day and walk around the show looking at coins. For instance, I was at the FUN show for five days, but I probably looked around for only about an hour."

The next show he'll be attending is the Collectorama Coin and Currency Show in Lakeland, Fla., at the end of February. Then he'll be at the Memphis International Paper Money Show in June and the ANA show in Chicago in August.

He introduced a new design at the recent FUN show.

"It was a \$100 California gold note, I've sold 25 percent of those already. It is a note, which in fine or extra fine condition will run \$12,000 to \$15,000 and there are only a couple of dozen known."

As for future projects, Prusmack won't say exactly what's coming up. He did say that the new design he's working on for the ANA summer convention in Chicago will tie in with Illinois, possibly through a famous individual from there.

He'll also be doing a design using Italian Renaissance art and a series of "Watermelon" notes. A specimen of one of the Grand Watermelon notes recently sold at auction for \$792,000.

"I get pretty close to the authentic thing when it comes to classic stuff, and people would rather pay me my \$25 or \$35 rather than \$792,000 for example. They can get a set of my Educationals for around a hundred dollars, signed and numbered."

Prusmack also customizes notes for his customers.

"On certain notes I put myself as the Secretary of the Treasury, and I leave the other name open so a customer could have their name on it. I call it signature art. Other people just like it blank."

He often places secret marks into his designs or incorporates his name or "Bureau of Engraving and Prusmack," a reference to his business.

He has thus far created about 50 designs, some 10 of which are original fantasy notes like the Oregon Trail \$100 note for ANA, the Princess Diana £1 note, the Winston Churchill Bank of England £1 note, or the Scotland £100 note depicting Robert Bruce and a Scottish castle.

Many are still available, but his latest, the \$5 California gold note introduced at the FUN show, may be gone by summer. His Educational design seems to be going quickly as well.

## **NOTES FROM A FRACTIONAL CURRENCY PRESENTATION BOOK**

**BY: DOUG HALES**

Civil War broke out in 1861 and by 1862 it was virtually impossible for a business to make change, because everyone was hoarding coins rather than circulating them. This led to Congress passing the Postage Currency Act of July 17, 1862 and the fractional Currency Act of March 3, 1863 authorizing the government to issue paper postage currency and fractional currency to supplement the use of coins in conducting day to day business. There were five different issues of fractional currency between 1862 and 1876. The postage currency issue is considered the first issue of fractional currency.

In May of 1866, SM. Clark, Chief of the National Currency Bureau, prepared sixteen embossed leather bound presentation books containing 31 uniface specimens of fractional currency representing samples of the notes that had been printed to date. The books were 6<sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" wide by 4<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" and were bound in either brown, black, blue, red or green leather. The spine is gold embossed with "SPECIMENS OF UNITED STATES FRACTIONAL CURRENCY" on S lines plus an ornate scrollwork design. The front and back covers have ornate scrollwork in gold with an area in the center of the front for the name of the man receiving the presentation book and his title. Most books bear a personalized front cover; however, Postmaster Dennison's book does not. This leads one to believe that the other known book that is not personalized is one of the 16 originally prepared.

All of the notes contained in these books were specially prepared and 24 of the 31 notes are unique to these books. All of the notes are printed uniface with none bearing the bronze "SPECIMEN" on the blank side.

The 3 cent light curtain and the 50 cent type II back are not included in these books. Based on their absence, it is presumed that these 2 varieties were not put into production until after May 10, 1866.

### **UNIQUE DIFFERENCES OF NOTES IN PRESENTATION BOOKS**

First Issue:

- 1) The paper used for the 5 cent & 25 cent notes is a grayish white bond that has had a brownish stain wiped on both sides. Whereas, all other 5 & 25 cent notes are printed on buff paper or shades thereof.
- 2) The face of the 5-cent note has a double frame line, rather than a single frame line.
- 3) The backs of all four notes are missing the cutting frame lines.
- 4) The American Bank Note Company printed the back of the 25-cent note. All other known specimens and proofs were printed by the National Bank Note Company.

Second Issue:

- 1) All faces are missing the bronze oval.
- 2) All backs are missing the bronze value surcharge.

Third Issue:

- 1) The faces of the 10, 25, & 50-cent notes are missing the bronze value surcharges.
- 2) The backs of the 10, 25, & 50-cent notes are missing the bronze value surcharges.

**PRESENTATION BOOKS & (current owners if known)**  
**All books were presented May 9th & 10th, 1866**

Book#1	President Andrew Johnson (Thomas F. X. O'Mara)
Book#2	Salmon P. Chase, Chief Justice U.S. Supreme Court (unknown)
Book#3	F. E. Spinner, Treasurer of the United States (Howard Cohen)
Book#4	William Seward, Secretary of State (unknown)
Book#5	Edwin Stanton, Secretary of War (unknown)
Book#6	Gideon Wells, Secretary of the Navy (Bob Laub)
Book#7	Hugh McCulloch, Secretary of the Treasury (unknown)
Book#8	James Harlan, Secretary of the Interior. (unknown)
Book#9	James Speed, Attorney General (unknown)
Book # 10	William Dennison, Postmaster General (ANA Museum)
Book # 11	L. S. Foster, President Pro Tern of the Senate (Smithsonian)
Book # 12	William Fessenden, US Senator (ANS Museum)
Book # 13	Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House (unknown)
Book 14	S. M. Clark, Chief of the National Currency Bureau (J.J. Ford)
Book # 15	S. M. Clark - second copy (Stacks auction Oct. 1993 of Halpern Coll.)
Book# 16	William Chandler, Asst. Secretary of the Treasury (Schneuermann)

Two books are known without any identification as to who they were prepared for. Book A has the original stamped leather cover, but no name of the recipient (F. G. Kirchner estate). Book B was rebound in the twentieth century with no identification of the original owner retained. The pages of this book are contained in this exhibit (D.K. Hales). We know that at least one book has been cut up, because some of the notes reside in collections of F.C.C.B. members. It is very likely that these three books represent three of the seven books listed above with unknown locations.

**COPY OF THE LETTER THAT ACCOMPANIED THE FRACTIONAL  
CURRENCY SPECIMEN BOOK TO PRESIDENT ANDREW JOHNSON**

**May 9, 1866**

**Sir:**

*I have the honor to transmit herewith a small volume prepared in this Division containing Specimens of all the paper issues made by this Department of a less denomination than one dollar.*

*I think it will not be without interest to you as a memento of one of the measures this Department was compelled to use in sustaining the Government during its time of trial; and as the necessity for such issues will pass away when the country is sufficiently recuperated to restore specie to the channels of circulation, the time I trust will soon come when such a volume will be interesting as a historic record.*

*I have the honor to be,  
Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,*

**S. M. Clark**

**Chief of Division**

**To the President**

# An Artist's Brush with Numismatics

U.S. NUMISMATICS

During the turbulent times of the Civil War, freelance artist Winslow Homer captured a disquieting but realistic moment in time with the Army of the Potomac.

ONE OF THE most exhilarating aspects of being a numismatist is discovering the inherent intertwining of the hobby with other disciplines. The pursuit of numismatic knowledge is not always limited to the specimens themselves, and often leads to an investigation of other intriguing facts and related sources. This cross-pollination frequently is surprising and exciting. Collectors become students of the world—examining numismatic pieces from multi-faceted perspectives, analyzing their social, economic, historical and artistic influences. I find my own collector radar on alert at all times. Wherever I am, whatever I am doing, I always am looking for more numismatic information and inspiration.

## Prelude to a Purchase

MY 7-YEAR-OLD daughter and I were strolling through a local art gallery last summer, when we came across a large collection of centerfold illustrations from 1860s issues of *Harper's Weekly*. We gazed in admiration as we thumbed through this wonderful art. Suddenly we spotted one picture that really piqued our interest. Titled by the artist "A Descent on the Sutler" and captioned "Pay-Day in the Army of the Potomac," it was from the February 28, 1863, issue.

We found this print captivating for several reasons. (I probably was a bit more excited, but my daughter feigned fascination extremely well.) First, it depicted a Civil War scene, which quenched my thirst from a historical perspective. Second, it highlighted United States currency, which satisfied my numismatic appetite. Finally, it was drawn by one of America's greatest artistic talents—Winslow Homer.

After a few more moments of appreciative reflection, we went on our way. My enthusiasm for the piece must have been quite evident, because

by Thomas F.X. O'Mara  
LM 4718



President Abraham Lincoln faced serious difficulties in 1863, not the least of which was low morale on the home front. Artist Winslow Homer caught but one aspect of the problem in his "Pay-Day" illustration.

YOUNG HOMER DID not appreciate the conservative art work in vogue, believing it was constrictive and not "true" to the subject matter.

.....

a month later my family presented me with the framed *Harper's Weekly* illustration for my birthday. I can only imagine my daughter trying to explain our "discovery" to her mother. Families of avid numismatists apparently get used to dealing with such idiosyncrasy—at least mine has.) As the proud owner, I was determined to discover additional information about my new acquisition.

Winslow Homer's illustration entitled "A Descent on the Sutler" appeared in the February 28, 1863, issue of *Harper's Weekly* and portrayed President Lincoln as a purveyor of goods and questionable ethics.

### Portrait of the Artist

WINSLOW HOMER WAS born on February 24, 1836, in Boston, Massachusetts. He took a liking to art at an early age and spent hours watching his mother paint with watercolors and accompanying her to Boston art galleries. Young Homer did not appreciate the conservative art work





in vogue, believing it was constrictive and not "true" to the subject matter. Anticipating a trend developing in American art in the mid 1800s (the Native School and the Hudson River School), Homer was more comfortable with the objectivity and naturalism of scenes from everyday life.

In 1855 *Harper's Weekly* was founded in New York and published some of Homer's sketches. The young illustrator moved to New York, assimilating nicely into the new, artistic movement. When the Civil War broke out, Homer turned down *Harper's* offer to be a full-time correspondent, insisting on freelancing. From late 1861 through early 1863, he marched with the Army of the Potomac, witnessing firsthand the Peninsular Campaign under General George McClellan's leadership. Although war and its omnipresent sense of urgency may not provide the easiest or most harmonious subject matter, Homer maintained his powerful and direct style, while conveying scenes of military life that were highly acclaimed by the public.

After the war, Homer began a long and distinguished career as a painter. He continued to express his basic philosophy: "When you paint, try to put down exactly what you see. Whatever else you have to offer will come out anyway." His paintings, packed with drama and splendid color, were quite popular.

In the early 1870s, Homer switched from oils to watercolors, believing the latter allowed him to paint more realistically. His artistic development coincided with the beginning of the American Watercolor Movement. Prior to this time, "aquarellists" (painters who specialized in the watercolor medium) were not taken seriously as artists, as watercolors were used by "real" artists solely for preliminary work. An 1873 *New York Times* review of a watercolor exhibit summed up the prevailing opinions of the day:

Many persons imagine that a water-color is nothing more or less than a sort of cheap oil-painting; that it can be done in about a quarter of the time it takes to execute a work in oil; that it will soon fade; that it makes "no show whatever" when hung besides oils and that, consequently, it ought to be sold at about half the price of a work in that medium.

The critics proved false oracles, and art patrons both here and abroad began to embrace this new "American" form of expression.



**After the Civil War, Homer began a distinguished career as a painter. All his works display a distinctive realism and directness. However, it is his dramatic watercolors that have earned him a unique and revered place in the history of American art.**

BETTMANN/CORBIS

IN 1861 AND early 1862, the Union suffered from a real lack of military leadership made worse by injurious indecision and procrastination.

On October 1, 1862, Lincoln met with McClellan on the battlefield (bottom) and urged him to attack the Confederate Army, stopping General Lee (below) once and for all. Again General McClellan failed.



At last, American art had an imprint of its own, and many of the great watercolorists began to garner popular acclaim. Besides Winslow Homer, there were John Singer Sargent, Louis Comfort Tiffany, James McNeill Whistler and, much later, Georgia O'Keeffe, to name a few. Students of bank-note art may recognize the well-respected James David Smillie, who founded the New York Etching Society and the American Water Color Society. However, one of the best known then—and now—was the young, Civil War freelance artist, Winslow Homer.

### Historical Background

AT THE TIME Homer created the "Pay-Day" illustration in early 1863, President Abraham Lincoln was facing serious difficulties. Although Union military forces had successes in the early years of the Civil War, especially out West, a successful strategy for the Eastern campaign took longer to develop. Very little good news buoyed the Northern cause. In 1861 and early 1862, the Union suffered from a real lack of military leadership made worse by injurious indecision and procrastination. In late 1861, President Lincoln placed General George McClellan in charge of the Army of the Potomac in the East. It was an unfortunate choice.

After McClellan's botched Peninsular Campaign (a poorly timed and terribly executed alternative plan devised by the general), the Army of the Potomac was under increased pressure to perform. Finally, with the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, McClellan's Army chalked up what might be described as a strong "draw." The potential to win the battle, destroy Lee's Army and end the war were all within McClellan's grasp, but again he failed to execute the plans successfully.

On September 22, 1862, Lincoln turned bloody Antietam into positive Union propaganda by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation. On October 1, he met with General McClellan on the battlefield and personally urged him to attack General Lee's Army. Again the general moved too cautiously, and again his efforts were late and ineffective.

In the winter of 1862, things went from bad to worse. Lincoln told a visitor, "If there is a worse place than

IN THE WINTER of 1862, things went from bad to worse. Lincoln told a visitor, "If there is a worse place than hell, I am in it."

.....

hell, I am in it." He had lost much of his political support in the autumn congressional elections. Many Republicans were upset with him for sticking with McClellan so long; without their wholehearted support, the Democrats gained seats. Even the delegation from Lincoln's home state of Illinois went Democratic. When asked for his reaction to the news, Lincoln said he "felt like the boy who stubbed his toe . . . he was too big to cry, and it hurt too much to laugh."

General Ambrose Burnside was given command of the Army of the Potomac, but brought only more disappointment. The terrible whipping at Fredericksburg led to further erosion of Northern support. *Harper's Weekly* summarized commonly shared sentiments:

The people of the United States have borne, silently and grimly, imbecility, treachery, failure, privation, loss of friends and means, almost every suffering which can affect a brave people. But they cannot be expected to suffer that such massacres as this at Fredericksburg shall be repeated.

To say things were bleak was an understatement, and Lincoln's ability to lead came into question daily. Northern support and morale reached a new low, and the press sought to spotlight alleged incompetence and corruption in both the military and civilian sectors.

### Homer's Interpretation

HOMER'S *HARPER'S WEEKLY* illustration parodies the situation confronting President Lincoln in February 1863. The army was under intense (and somewhat skeptical) public scrutiny. It is no wonder that in the sketch we find President Lincoln depicted as a racketeering "sutler" (a private purveyor of provisions for the military) among an undisciplined and riotous Army of the Potomac. The troops had not been paid in six months, and there was a

Winslow Homer spent much of 1862 as a correspondent marching with the Army of the Potomac (pictured here in winter camp) and sketching scenes of everyday military life for *Harper's Weekly*. This photograph was taken about the same time the artist created the "Pay-Day" illustration.





Not Actual Size

A severe shortage of circulating coinage during the Civil War necessitated the use of postage currency as an emergency measure.

shortage of food at their winter camp near Falmouth, Virginia. One can only imagine the scenes Homer witnessed as he put pen to paper to capture this moment in time.

The illustration seems to send an obvious message. I believe the artist was highlighting the discrepancy between reality and the Northern perception of the war effort. The central scene at the top depicts an orderly distribution of pay to the soldiers in camp. On either side are smaller vignettes depicting how a good soldier behaves once he has been paid. On the left, a group writes letters and sends money home; on the right, loved ones receive the longed-for letters and yearn for their brave, patriotic soldiers who are far away at the front. These three scenes depict what most Americans *assumed* was going on in the Army.

The artist comes closer to reality in the scene below. Here we find the true, sad state of affairs. Abraham Lincoln, as the sutler, runs a well-stocked, albeit highly priced, store. There are pickled oysters, cheese, condensed milk, eggs, fruit and many barrels of libations (one clearly marked "brandy"), none of which would be considered normal military fare. The raucous soldiers are quite unruly and apparently have descended upon the sutler in a desperate attempt to spend all their pay on immediate gratification. There are many interesting characters in this scene, but the disquieting depiction of the drummer boy clamoring for a drink is particularly intriguing—and deftly makes a point. The folks back home had heard things were bad, but probably not this bad.

### Numismatic Connections

AN EXCITING DISCOVERY for numismatists in Homer's "Pay-Day" piece is the artistic use of paper currency and coinage to reinforce the theme. The three "coins" across the top of the picture are merely frames for the dramatic counterpoint and, thus, lack precise numismatic detail. However, the distinctive stars around the edge provide a more concrete

*Continued on page 209*

## An Artist's Brush

continued from page 174

reference. The half dime, dime, quarter dollar, half dollar and silver dollar of this period all were of the Seated Liberty type. In 1862 all but the half dime and dime had stars on the obverse. However, the half dime and dime displayed stars as recently as 1860 and still were in circulation. Technically, the coins depicted could have been any of the circulating coinage of the realm. The notes displayed, however, are another story.

The two 10-cent notes on either side of the vignette at top center are easily identified as first-issue United States postage currency. The presence of these notes is not surprising, given the severe shortage of circulating coinage during the Civil War and that the issuance of postage currency (under the Postage Currency Act of July 17, 1862) was widely accepted as a stopgap. The portrait of George Washington, which was adopted from contemporary postage stamps, identifies the issues. The notes were produced in both perforated and non-perforated varieties. National Bank Note Company of New York originally had the contract to manufacture these notes, but because of security reasons, American Bank Note Company printed the backs. The notes depicted by Homer were green, non-perforated, 10-cent U.S. postage currency, measuring approximately 44 x 66mm.

The inscription found on the faces of these notes reads POSTAGE CURRENCY/FURNISHED ONLY BY THE ASSISTANT TREASURERS/AND DESIGNATED DEPOSITARIES OF/THE U.S./RECEIVABLE FOR POSTAGE STAMPS/AT ANY POST OFFICE. In small type at the bottom appears the name of the printer.



Actual Size: 38.1mm

The design of Seated Liberty coinage (such as this 1851 dollar), incorporating stars around the upper portion of the obverse, probably was the inspiration for the composition of "Pay-Day."

NATIONAL BANK NOTE CO. N.Y. The standard reference *Paper Money of the United States* by Robert Friedberg lists two, straight-edge varieties of this note (FR 1242, with the American Bank Note Company (ABNCo) monogram on the back, and FR 1243, with no monogram). Since the backs are not shown in Homer's illustration, we cannot determine exactly which Friedberg number these notes represent.

A soldier's pay was just enough to buy a few extras, if any, from a sutler. These items generally were things a soldier could use in daily camp life and, therefore, usually not of high value. The sutler, however, had a captive audience and no commercial competitors. Granted, wartime merchants took great risks, especially when setting up right outside a military camp; nevertheless, sutlers commonly were perceived as profiteers. They were not there out of a sense of patriotic duty.

Demand was high for lower-priced goods, and these transactions required the ability to make change. As was true across the country, hoarding limited the availability of small-denomination coinage. Therefore, the use of U.S. postage currency was a real necessity in all

walks of life. Many of the soldiers depicted in Homer's rendering seem to be clenching large-size bills in their fists. This probably is simple artistic license.

Numismatics definitely influenced the thematic elements of this illustration. Homer's work conveys a great deal about many related topics—the Civil War, postage currency and the artist himself. This illustration continues to provide me with hours of enjoyment and education, and all because I became involved with this fascinating hobby. •

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- Thomas O'Mara, a convertible securities trader residing in New Jersey, collects United States postage and fractional currency, as well as New Jersey obsolete bank notes and scrip. O'Mara is president of the Fractional Currency Collectors Board (FCCB) and a member of the Society of Paper Money Collectors, American Numismatic Society, Civil War Token Society and Ocean County (New Jersey) Coin Club.

# U.S. POSTAL NOTES

Small postal notes follow in footsteps of fractional currency in the late 1800s

By: Michele Orzano  
*COIN WORLD Staff*

U.S. postal notes offer collectors a glimpse into a little known area of American history and a bridge into paper money collecting.

This article will examine the postal notes issued between 1883 and 1894 though there are issues in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the Civil War, when coins needed to make change were in short supply, the federal government issued postage and fractional currency. These size notes were issued in denominations under \$1. The designs for the first issue actually resembled postage stamps. Postage and fractional currency notes circulated from 1862 to 1875. They were in 3-, 5-, 10-, 15-, 25- and 50-cent denominations.

The need to have access to small denomination financial instruments continued after the war and by 1882, the American Express Co. became the first firm to introduce small "notes" to be used in the mails. By 1883, 6,300 U.S. Post Offices were authorized to offer U.S. postal notes for amounts less than \$5. At that time, 25 cents bought a meal and a dollar was a day's wages. The notes, printed on watermarked paper, had a three-month expiration date. A series of articles by postal note collector and researcher Nicholas Bruyer, published in the early 1970s in the Society of Paper Money Collectors journal *Paper Money*, are often referred to as the source of information for

collectors and researchers in this area. According to Bruyer, "if the postage stamp

has been honored as the forefather of fractional paper, then so must fractional currency be revered as the progenitor of the United States postal note. All three of these types of paper were used in the 19th century to bolster the circulation of coinage, which always seemed to be in short supply. Stamps, postage and fractional currency and postal notes were all transmitted through the mails for the payment of small sums. All were for the general use of the people, all payable to bearer. Yet, when the histories of paper money were written, the postal note somehow became separated from its compatriots."

These postal notes feature ornate lettering and borders. There were two columns on the right-hand side of the face of the postal notes requiring the post office to punch out the amount the note was worth. The signature of the postmaster and the location of the post office were required on the postal note. On the earliest notes, the month and year were also punched.

Postal notes are divided into five issues among three different bank note printers. The First Issue, Second Issue and Third Issue postal notes were produced by the Homer Lee Bank Note Co. from 1883 to 1887. A vignette of Liberty with the text FEE THREE CENTS surrounding the vignette, appears on the first issues.

Variations of the design were used on the issues to follow. Second Issue postal notes were smaller in size than First Issue notes and were printed on white paper instead of yellow paper. The Second Issue notes also had the addition of a cancellation star in the box in the lower right. According to Bruyer, "The box instructs the paying postmaster that he must 'Punch out this star canceling this note.' On the earlier notes of the First Issue, the only evidence on it indicating that it had been paid was the postmark of the paying office."

The Third Issue postal notes had the words ANY MONEY ORDER OFFICE added to reflect a change in law regarding redemption of the notes. Before the change, redemption of the postal note could only been done through "the postmaster of the money order office" at a special post office.

The Fourth Issue postal note was redesigned by Thomas E Morris when his employer, the American Bank Note Co., was awarded a four-year contract to print the notes between 1887 to 1891. The fifth issue postal notes feature the same design as Fourth Issue except for the addition of the new printing company's name, Dunlap & Clarke Co. of Philadelphia, whose four-year contract ran from 1891 to 1894. Congress then passed a law calling for the issuance of postal notes to cease on July 1, 1894.

During its run between 1883

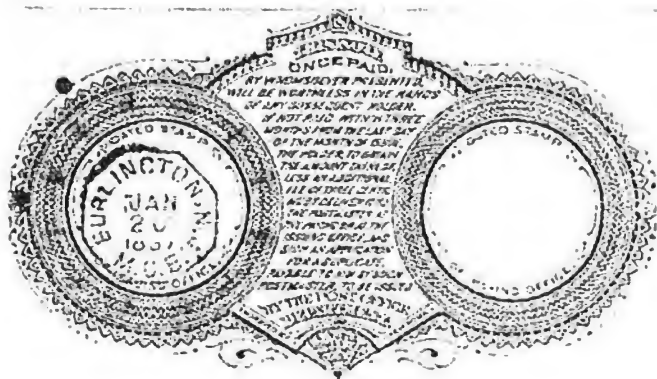
During its run between 1883 and 1894, 70,824,173 postal notes were issued worth \$126.5 million, according to Bruyer. Less than 1,000 are known because most were cashed and destroyed. Collectors usually collect postal notes by type, states of issue or unusual places of issue such as a temporary post office at an exhibition.

An organization dedicated to the postal note, The Postal Order Society of the United Kingdom, was formed in 1985 and brings together the paper stamp collecting fields. Jim Noll and Jack Harwood are the U.S. representatives. A newsletter is published quarterly and mail-bid sales are held twice a year. For membership information,

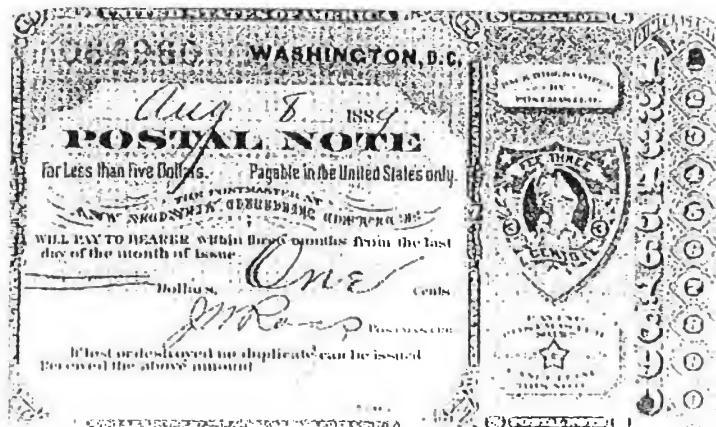
contact Jack Harwood, P.O. Box 32015, Midtown Station, Sarasota, FL 34239. The Society also keeps a list of all postal orders issued and makes it available to its members. Report new finds, complete with serial number and city of issue, to Jim Knoll, Box 3410, Escondido, CA 92033.



SECOND ISSUE postal note features a star cancellation in the bottom right of the note.



BACK OF Third Issue postal notes were printed by the Homer Lee Bank Note Co. Small modifications to the text on the face and the back are what set this apart from other issues



FOURTH ISSUE postal note shows the redesign done by Thomas F. Morris for American Bank Note Co. The Fifth Issue looked the same but had the name of the third and final printing company, Dunlap & Clarke, in place of ABNCo.